

TO: Senator Edward Meyer, Co-chair, Representative Richard Roy, Co-chair, and Members of the Environment Committee

FROM: Dr. Nan Zyla, President, HARP, Inc. (skyharp@yahoo.com, (860) 767-2196)

RE: SUPPORT RSB-994, An Act Concerning Leghold Traps and RHB-6552, An Act Banning the Sale or Use of Computer Software or Services to Remotely Operate Weapons to Hunt Animals or Birds;
OPPOSE RB-6553, An Act Concerning Sunday Hunting

DATE: March 9, 2009

I am here to support banning leghold traps. I support RSB-994, An Act Concerning Leghold Traps. I am following in the footsteps of such notables as Bart Giamatti, Roger Tory Peterson, Rachel Carson, Charles Darwin, and the first DEP Commissioner, Dan Lufkin, all of whom referred to traps as cruel and inhumane. Dan Lufkin described how, as a young boy he used leghold traps until early one morning when he found a police dog in his trap. He said it took him three hours to release her "and yet a lifetime to forget the pain and fear in her eyes." He never trapped again.

All of these famous people and many more have pointed out the inhumanity of traps, how they cause excruciating pain and suffering of animals, how animals have had to chew off their limbs to escape, how traps have been called "the cruelest devices ever invented by man." The purpose of this bill is "to prevent needless animal suffering." It is irresponsible NOT to ban these traps, especially when an unnecessary threat, trapping, can be removed by enacting legislation against it. Leghold traps have been banned in 89 countries and several states, including Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island. A lawsuit filed against the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife resulted in a consent decree to stop the agency from continuing to violate the Endangered Species Act by allowing trappers to use traps that catch, injure and sometimes kill threatened and endangered species. (over)

Endangered, threatened, and protected species have been victims of traps. Traps are random and non-discriminating, and who will fall victim to a trap cannot be predicted. Adults and kids, dogs, cats, eagles, songbirds, turtles, and many other, non-intended victims have been caught in traps.

Beyond the cruelty inflicted by traps, I would like you to consider another facet of traps, that of causing loss of habitat. Trapping involves the invasion of what remains of animal and bird habitat. This intervention and invasion by trapping alters the environment and renders existing habitat unsafe and unsuitable. This is actual **habitat loss**.

DEP caters to the ½ of 1% in Connecticut who trap, because the sale of hunting and trapping licenses makes up a large part of the Wildlife Division's budget. The wildlife in this State is owned by all the taxpayers, including the 94% who do not hunt or trap animals. Sensitivity to the relationship of our species to the environment and to the creatures we share it with is both a test and a challenge to our humanity. To callously disregard the needless pain and suffering inflicted upon our fellow creatures is to call into question our claim to be civilized.

I also support a ban on internet hunting, RHB-6552. This cruel practice has been banned by at least 38 states, including the entire East Coast, with the exception of Connecticut and Georgia! In other states, a ban on internet hunting has been considered necessary for national security. The NRA even supports a ban on internet hunting.

I oppose RB-6553, An Act Concerning Sunday Hunting. Hunting is allowed in Connecticut six days a week. As a safety issue, hunting cannot coexist with family recreation, such as hiking, walking, birdwatching, wildlife photography. In practice, this means that people cannot engage in non-hunting activities on or near private land that is used for hunting.

Humane Alternatives for Resolving Problems, HARP, Inc.

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